The Principal

Effective principals attack incoherence.

—Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow,
and Easton (1998, p. 287)

Forget about the principal as head of the school for a moment and think of her or him as someone just as buffeted as the teacher is by wanted or unwanted and often incomprehensible changes—and, what is more, *expected to lead these very changes*. Change is only one of the forces competing for the principal's attention, and usually not the most compelling one. And when it is compelling, as is the case recently, it is difficult to focus and sustain the work needed for reform to be effective. Yet some principals are actively engaged as initiators or facilitators of continuous improvements in their schools. The principal is in the mid dle of the relationship between teachers and external ideas and people. As in most human triangles, there are constant conflicts and dilemmas. How the principal approaches (or avoids) these issues determines to a large extent whether these relationships constitute a Bermuda triangle of innovations.

An understanding of what reality is *from the point of view of people within the role* is an essential starting point for constructing a prac tical theory of the meaning and results of change attempts. This phe nomenology is social science's contribution to addressing the frequent lament, "No one understands me." In the field of educational change, everyone feels misunderstood. One of the most revealing and frustrating indicators of the difficulties in educational change is the participants' frequent experience of having their intentions not only misunderstood, but interpreted exactly opposite of what they meant. Principals should

have no problem claiming their fair share of frustration, as the role of the principal has become dramatically more complex and overloaded over the past decade. On the optimistic side, very recent research has

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identified some specific change-related behaviors of principals who deal effectively with educational change. It is time to go beyond the empty phrase, "The principal is the gatekeeper of change."

Although research on school improvement is now into its fifth decade, systematic research on what the principal actually does and its relationship to stability and change is quite recent. Some of the earlier implementation research identified the role of the principal as central to promoting or inhibiting change, but it did not examine the principal's role in any depth or perspective. By the 1990s, research had accumulated that put principals front and center in leading improvement at the school and community levels. Today, no serious change effort would fail to em
phasize the key role of the principal. Most provide both professional development and altered job descriptions highlighting the role of the principal in leading change on the ground. The irony is that as the change expectations heighten, the *principalship* itself has become overloaded in a way that makes it impossible to fulfill the promise of widespread, sus
tained reform.

I start with a description of where principals are. I then turn to the part of their role that interests us the most—what principals do and don't do in relation to change, ending with some clear conclusions about what highly effective principals do to maximize performance in their schools and beyond. I should say at the outset that effective principals share—
in fact, develop—leadership among teachers. So we are really talking about school leadership more generally to include assistant principals, department heads, grade-level coordinators, and other teacher

leaders of all types in the school. Principals are important in their own right and all the more so in terms of how they lead other potential leaders in the school.

WHERE PRINCIPALS ARE

"Pressure drives heads to drink" (2000) blares a headline in the *Times Education Supplement* in England. The article reports that among the principals and deputy principals in the district of Warwickshire (a district with 250 schools), 40% had visited the doctor with stress-related problems in the past year, and 30% were taking medication. Warwickshire was selected, says the article, because it was considered to be a well-run district—a good employer! The 2013 MetLife survey mentioned earlier, which showed that teacher satisfaction and engagement was declining,

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also found (and not surprisingly) that 75% of principals feel that their job has become too complex, half of all principals feel under great stress "several days a week," and the percentage who say they are satisfied had dropped from 68% to 59% since 2008 (Metropolitan Life Insurance, 2013).

In *What's Worth Fighting for in the Principalship?* (Fullan, 1997), I reported on a study of 137 principals and vice principals in Toronto.

The growing overload experienced by principals was evident over 20 years ago: 90% reported an increase over the previous 5 years in the demands made on their time, including new program demands, the number of board priorities and directives, and the number of directives from the Ministry of Education. Time demands were listed as having increased in dealing with parent and community groups (92% said there was an increase), trustee requests (91%), administration activities (88%), staff involvement and student services (81%), social services (81%), and board initiatives (69%).

Principals and vice principals also were asked about their perceptions of effectiveness: 61% reported a *decrease in principal effectiveness*, with only 13% saying it was about the same, and 26% reporting an increase. The same percentage, 61%, reported decreases in "the effectiveness of assistance from immediate superiors and from administration." Further, 84% reported a decrease in the authority of the principal; 72%, a decrease in trust in leadership of the principal; and 76%, a decrease in principal involvement in decision making at the system level. To the question, "Do you think the principal can effectively fulfill all the responsibilities as signed to him/her?" 91% responded "no" (Fullan, 1997, p. 2).

The discouragement felt by principals in attempting to cover all the bases is aptly described in the following three responses from inter views conducted by Duke (1988) with principals who were considering quitting:

> The conflict for me comes from going home every night acutely aware of what didn't get done and feeling after six years that I ought to have a better batting average than I have.
>
> If you leave the principalship, think of all the "heart-work" you're go ing to miss. I fear I'm addicted to it and to the pace of the principalship—those 2,000 interactions a day. I get fidgety in meetings because they're too slow, and I'm not out there interacting with people.
>
> The principalship is the kind of job where you're expected to be all

things to all people. Early on, if you're successful, you have gotten feedback

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> that you are able to be all things to all people. And then you feel an obligation to continue to do that which in your own mind you're not capable of doing. And that causes some guilt. (p. 309)

Duke was intrigued by the "dropout rate" of principals after encountering an article stating that 22% of Vermont administrators employed in the fall of 1984 had left the state's school systems by the fall of 1985. In interviewing principals about why they considered quitting, he found that sources of dissatisfaction included policy and administration, lack of achievement, sacrifices in personal life, lack of growth opportunities, lack of recognition and too little responsibility, relations with subordinates, and lack of support from superiors. They expressed a number of concerns about the job itself: the challenge of doing all the things that principals are expected to do, the mundane or boring nature of much of the work, the debilitating array of personal interactions, the politics of dealing with various constituencies, and the tendency for managerial concerns to supersede leadership functions. Duke (1988) suggested that the reasons principals were considering quitting were related to fatigue, awareness of personal limitations, and awareness of the limitation of career choices. Principals experienced reality shock, "the shock-like reactions of new workers when they find themselves in a work situation for which they have spent several years preparing and for which they thought they were going to be prepared, and then suddenly find that they are not" (p. 309). Duke concludes:

> A number of frustrations expressed by these principals derived from the contexts in which they worked. Their comments send a clear message to those who supervised them: principals need autonomy *and* support. The need for autonomy may require supervisors to treat each principal differently; the need for support may require supervisors to be sensitive to each principal's view of what he or she finds meaningful or trivial about the work. (p. 312,

emphasis in original)

There is no question that the demands on the principalship have become even more intensified over the past 10 years, 5 years, 1 year. More and more principals in almost every Western country are retiring early; more and more potential teacher leaders are concluding that it is simply not worth it to take on the leadership of schools.

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> Wanted: A miracle worker who can do more with less, pacify rival groups, endure chronic second-guessing, tolerate low levels of support, process large volumes of paper and work double shifts (75 nights a year). He or she will have carte blanche to innovate, but cannot spend much money, replace any personnel, or upset any constituency. (Evans, 1995, p. 5)

Many of these barriers to the principalship were further documented in the 2014 study by the Canadian Association of Principals in a report titled, *The Future of the Principalship in Canada.* In this survey princi pals acknowledged, and in many ways valued, the growing diversity of student populations. But they lamented the lack of support in coping with the new challenges. Notably:

> Many principals feel professionally isolated because of the pressing demands of time and the complexity and specific school-community contexts of their work. (p. 8)
>
> That urgent managerial functions are crowding out leadership develop

ment. (p. 10)

"The way forward" recommendations are compatible with our analysis:

> Teach and learn for diversity; collaborate and build professional capac ity; build family and community relationships; use technology for creative learning and citizenship; and promote continuous learning. (pp. 9–10)

Is the principalship an impossible job? A job that is simply not worth the aggravation and toll it takes? Even students notice, such as this sec ondary student: "I don't think being a head is a good job. You have to work too hard. Some days [the head] looks knackered—sorry, very tired" (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Toley, & Beresford, 2000, p. 126).

At the present time, the principalship perhaps is not worth it, and therein lies the solution. If effective principals energize teachers in complex times, what is going to energize principals? We are now beginning to see more clearly examples of school principals who are successful. These insights can help existing principals become more ef fective; even more, they provide a basis for establishing a system of recruiting, nurturing, and supporting and holding accountable school leaders (see Chapter 12). What I see emerging very clearly is the "prin cipal as lead learner."

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I should forecast where this section is headed. Policymakers began to accept that the principal is crucial. They then overinterpreted the research findings and miscast principals as autonomous agents (e.g., "give them the license to lead the school with fewer restrictions") or as micromanagers (e.g., "let's make sure they do the right things"). They missed the deeper finding that effective principals operate as "lead learn
ers," within which they participate as learners to help develop the group. I will examine this trend more closely.

Until recently the principal was often neglected in the formulation of strategies for reform. As research mounted about the significant impact of the principal, for better or for worse, on reform outcomes, policymak ers began to incorporate the role of school leaders in leading change initiatives. This has not proven easy to do, and in fact has helped to illu minate the fundamental difficulties of changing school cultures. I know of no improving school that doesn't have a principal who is good at leading improvement. "Almost every single study of school effectiveness has shown both primary and secondary leadership to be a key factor," says Sammons (1999) in her major review. Let's see what happens when the spotlight is turned on the principal as change leader (hint: false first steps with some emergent clarity).

Bryk and his colleagues (1998) have been tracing the evolution of reform in Chicago schools since 1988. In schools that evidenced improvement over time (about one third of 473 elementary schools):

> Principals worked together with a supportive base of parents, teachers, and community members to mobilize initiative. Their efforts broadly focused along two major dimensions: first, reaching out to parents and community to strengthen the ties between local school professionals and the clientele they are to serve; and second, working to expand the professional capacities of individual teachers, to promote the formation of a coherent professional community, and to direct resources toward enhancing the quality of instruc tion. (p. 270)

These successful principals had (1) an "inclusive, facilitative orien

tation"; (2) an "institutional focus on student learning"; (3) "efficient management"; and (4) "combined pressure and support." They had a strategic orientation, using school improvement plans and instructional focus to "attack incoherence."

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> In schools that are improving, teachers are more likely to say that, once a program has begun, there is follow-up to make sure it is working and there is real continuity from one program to another. In our earlier research, we dubbed schools with high levels of incoherence "Christmas tree schools." Such schools were well-known showcases because of the variety of programs they boasted. Frequently, however, these programs were uncoordinated and perhaps even philosophically inconsistent. (Bender Sebring & Bryk, 2000, pp. 441–442)

In continued work in Chicago, Bryk and Schneider (2002) found that principals are crucial for shaping "trust in schools," which has dramatic influences, both direct and indirect, on the effectiveness of the school, as noted in Chapter 6. They refer to "the *centrality* of principal leadership" in developing and sustaining relational trust, which establishes the conditions for success (p. 137, emphasis added). They conclude that "only when participants demonstrate their com
mitment to engage in such work [focused on improvement] and see others doing the same can a genuine professional community grounded in relational trust emerge. [In this respect] principals must take the lead" (p. 139).

Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010) got even more specific in their subsequent study of 100 relatively successful elementary schools compared to a matched sample of 100 schools in Chicago. The key explanation for differential perfor mance was "school leadership as the driver for change" (p. 62), which in turn focused on the development of four

interrelated forces: the professional capacity of teachers (individually and collectively), school climate (ensuring safety and orderliness in the aid of learning), par ent and community ties, and what the researchers call the “instruc tional guidance system” (instructional practices that engage students in relation to key learning goals), as these affected each and every class

room (p. 62). Note that these successful schools have strong ties to parents and the community. In my experience, when teachers do not develop their own individual and collective capacity, they are not con fident and keep parents at a distance. As their expertise develops, they begin to see parents as part of the solution, not part of the problem. As a result, performance of the school gets stronger because of the col lective efforts of the community and the school. Bryk et al. comment on this very point—getting stronger collectively—in their reference to Hancock Elementary School in Chicago:

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> Strong principal leadership at Hancock School fostered the development of a vigorous professional community that was both actively reaching out to parents and sustaining a focus on improving instruction. In contrast, reform efforts at Alexander remained fragmented, suffering from both poor coor dination and a lack of follow through. (p. 40)

As these ideas about the critical importance of instructional leader

ship gained ascendancy, the story in the hands of decisionmakers begins to go wrong. Liking the idea that the principal is key, policymakers run with the idea, badly misinterpreting it, ironically, at opposite ends of the continuum: school autonomy and micromanagement of instruc

tion. Several jurisdictions have granted certain schools increased school autonomy (in Australia they call them “independent public schools”). Schools get increased freedom from the bureaucracy in return for greater accountability. What happens is that many of these schools do not improve, and even if they do, they become detached from the rest of the schools, thereby weakening the system as a whole.

If schools are left on their own, most do not develop the focused collaboration (within their schools as well as externally) necessary for sustained improvement. A good example of the contrast between auton omy and focused collaboration can be found in David Kirp’s revealing study (2013) of Union City, New Jersey. Union City is a poor, crowded, Latino community that for much of the last quarter of the last century was the poorest-performing district in the state. That changed in the last decade. In 2011, 89.4% of the Union City students graduated from high school—15% more than the national average. Among other things, the Union City district got the principalship right, finding that produc tive ground between micromanaging and excessive autonomy. Kirp comments on nearby Trenton, a city that embraced what he calls “the great leader theory” (excessive individualism, in my words) whereby “superstar” principals were hired and given autonomy in exchange for delivering results. The results didn’t materialize. In Trenton from 1999 to 2008, the percentage of students passing grade 8 math tests rose from 18.2% to 21.9%. (By comparison, in Union City, the corresponding fig ures were 42% to 71%.)

Union City has been successful because it focuses on developing and employing the professional capital of its teachers, principals, and schools. Kirp (2013) refers to Les, a principal who does not understand her job in this fashion:

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> Aside from observing and evaluating the teachers, Les needs to help them improve. One strategy is to break through the isolation of the classrooms, encouraging teachers to work together, jointly devise projects for their students, and talk about what's working well in their classrooms and what isn't. Such collaboration, the evidence shows, can make a substantial difference in the quality of instruction. (p. 54)

The flip side of too much autonomy is defining and supervising the role of principal as detailed instructional leader—what I call micro madness. What has happened is that principals are seen as key; they are trained in classroom observation; sometimes consequential teacher appraisal is thrown in; and, to top it off, new roles at the district level are created to supervise principals. What started as a sensible idea— let's tighten the loop and be specific—becomes an odious task. DuFour and Mattos (2013), both former principals now engaged in research, comment on what Race to the Top precision has spawned in Tennessee, one of the first states to win the grant. The model that the state proposed (and was funded to carry out) "calls for 50% of a teacher's evaluation to be based on principal observations, 35% on student growth, and 15% on student achievement data" (p. 36). DuFour and Mattos summarize the new role:

> Principals or evaluators must observe new teachers six times each year and licensed teachers four times each year, considering one or more of four areas—instruction, professionalism, classroom environment, and planning. These four areas are further divided into 116 subcategories. Observations are to be preceded by a pre-conference, in which the principal and the teacher discuss the lesson, and followed by a post-conference, in which the principal shares his or her impressions of the teacher's performance. Principals must then input data on the observation using the state rubric for assessing teachers. Principals report that the process requires four to six hours for each observation. (p. 36)

One can readily surmise that if you are a principal in such a system, under intense scrutiny to cover all your assignments, you will either burn out or learn to go through the procedures superficially. In either case, actual improvement is the casualty.

Consider another example: a recent policy document from New Jersey titled (and based on) “Student Growth Objectives: Developing

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and Using Practical Measures of Student Learning” (New Jersey Department of Education, 2013). The document contains quite a good, rational discussion of specific and measurable objectives linked to stan dards, based on prior learning, measured between two points in time. Teachers are then required to develop student growth objectives (SGOs) and have them approved by the principal (or the principal’s designee) by November, with any changes completed and approved by February; finally, the teacher’s supervisor scores the SGO, with the rating being discussed at the annual summary conference.

What starts as a reasonable proposition—let’s be clear, know the individual students, and provide instruction accordingly—turns into one big compliance nightmare for teachers and principals alike. A good idea becomes an odious task. This type of well-intentioned compliance regimen is being replicated around the country in the name of account
ability. It will be nothing but a time and energy drain for all involved.

The cure becomes the disease, and it is ruining the principalship, not to mention student learning itself. It's as if the system has unlimited supervisory capacity and principals have all the time in the world to change teachers one at a time. Moreover, when principals do try to carry out the task diligently, they alienate themselves from teachers.

My conclusion is that neither school autonomy nor detailed observations are effective in producing results at scale. So, what is the solution? Instead we need a model that is still intense in its focus on instruction but that also involves and motivates *all teachers*.

THE PRINCIPAL AS LEAD LEARNER

There are two critical dimensions to the principal as lead learner: One is internal to the school; the other is external, what we call "system player."

Intra-School

I have already concluded that principals cannot affect the school one teacher at a time. They must change the culture of the school toward greater focused collaboration. They do this by becoming *the* lead learner. Let's start with the research. Vivianne Robinson and her colleagues conducted a large-scale "best-evidence synthesis" (BES) of research on the impact of school principals on student achievement.

First, let's consider what Robinson did not find. Surprisingly she did

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not find that *transformational leaders* were very effective in impacting student achievement (effect size = .14; an effect size of .40 or above is considered significant). These leaders, as summarized recently by John Hattie (2015b), help "set a vision, create common goals for the school, inspire and set direction, buffer staff from external demands, ensure fair and equitable staffing, and give teachers a high degree of autonomy" (p. 37). Essentially these actions are not close enough or intense enough to influence student learning.

By contrast, "instructional leaders" are more effective because they focus on how teachers impact student learning, and establish environments conducive to specific action that influences how teachers and students work together (the effect size for this cluster was .42). Robinson summarizes their conclusions in a book titled *Student-Centered Leadership* (2011). She found five leadership domains that had significant effect sizes (shown in parentheses) on student achievement:

1. Establishing goals and expectations (0.42)
2. Resourcing strategically (0.31)
3. Ensuring quality teaching (0.42)
4. Leading teacher learning and development (0.84)
5. Ensuring an orderly and safe environment (0.27)

Yes, some of these elements overlap with transformational leader ship, but the power factor—twice as impactful as any other—is "leading teacher learning and development," which is essentially what I mean by the role of learning leader. Within item 4, Robinson found that the principal who makes the biggest impact on learning is the one who at

tends to other matters as well, but, most important, "participates as a learner" with teachers in helping move the school forward. Leading teacher learning means being proactively involved with teachers such that principal and teachers alike are learning. Whereas Robinson called

this "instructional leader," I prefer lead learner because the former, as I have said, can be interpreted too narrowly, resulting in micromanaging.

Think of it this way: The principal who covers only such areas as

establishing a vision, acquiring resources for teachers, working to help individual teachers, and other similar activities does not necessarily *learn* what is specifically needed to stimulate ongoing organizational improvement. For the latter to happen, the principal must make both teacher learning and his or her own learning a priority. Within this domain of teacher learning and development, Robinson found two

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critical factors: the ability of the principal to make progress a collective endeavor (a core theme of this book) and skills for leading professional learning. To extrapolate from Robinson, both of these factors require the principal to be present as a learner. Principals who do not take the learner *stance* for themselves do not learn much from day to day, no matter how many years of "experience" they may accumulate, as little of that prior experience was really aimed at their own *learning*. Thus principals need to chart their own learning and be aware of its curve from day one if they are going to get better at leading. And they do this best through helping teachers learn.

A clear example of lead learner in action comes from Park Manor Public School (grades 6–8) in Elmira, Ontario. The principal's name happens to be James Bond (but you don't have to be James Bond to be this good). When James first arrived at the school he found mainly teachers in their first 2 or 3 years of teaching doing their own thing. He did several key things that set and put into motion a learning cul ture that he led. He said that they were going to focus on improved pedagogy (the innovation), and that they would establish a learning culture where "it was okay to make mistakes" (the process). He said

that he wanted teachers to be comfortable in front of him and each other (and in front of the students for that matter) saying that they did not how to do something, and that he would model this openness and support for learning. Together they focused on specific pedagogi cal practices in relation to improved literacy and math, for example. They set up a system of diagnosing each and every student's learning progress in relation to measurable learning outcomes. They developed their own "accelerated learning framework," learned effective prac tices from each other, and gradually introduced technology to enable deeper learning. James participated as a lead learner but did not direct the learning in detail (he rarely, for example, chaired meetings). By using this organic approach to developing a new culture—modeling the process, establishing a nonthreatening learning climate, focusing on specific pedagogical practices linked to whether and how they pro duced measurable learning outcomes, monitoring progress, sharing what works, adding technology that supported learning, and so on— James led the school toward dramatic improvements. For example, within 5 years the school's grade 6 writing scores increased from 42% high proficiency to 83% on the province's demanding assessment test (Park Manor's and other similar stories can be found in Fullan [2014b]; and the Park Manor video can be seen on www.michaelfullan.ca).

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Lead learner is not a vague concept. The principal does very specific things to improve learning. He or she affects the culture indirectly, *but nonetheless explicitly* in favor of actions that increase the learning of teachers and their students. There are only so many teachers the principal can affect one by one, but the principal can reach many teachers through and with the group. Put as a change premise: "If you want to change the group, use the group to change the group." In so doing the principal leads the school to become both effective and accountable for its own performance.

Elmore (2000) identified this theme some time ago:

> The job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result. (p. 15)

Stated another way, I have suggested that, internal to the school, principals should focus on building the three interrelated components of "professional capital"—human, social, and decisional (Fullan, 2014b). The core is to lead learning toward a collaborative culture where the group zeroes in on the specific learning needs of all students. This social capital is linked to what we call the "growing expertise of decisional capital"—the capacity to make evidence-based decisions, and to display expert judgment about difficult learning problems. These kinds of cultures foster the human capital of their members and are buttressed by hiring procedures that bring in effective newcomers; indeed, good teachers seek these kind of cultures.

System Player

The boundary between the school and the outside is becoming more permeable. This has opened up an exciting new (and daunting) world for principals. Remember that the main goal is to use all resources, including those outside the school, to build the professional capital of

teachers so that student learning can flourish. In so doing, principals need to become "system players"—school leaders who contribute to and benefit from the increased performance of other schools in the district and of the system as a whole. This new engagement of principals in the

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betterment of the system is in its early stages, so some aspects of it are not yet well developed.

If as a principal you go it alone, you can get only so far in developing a very good school. I would venture to say that although it is possible to become a great school despite the district you are in, it is not possible to *stay* effective if the system is not cultivating greatness in *all* of its schools. I think it is this realization—that the system matters a great deal—that stimulated the Gates Foundation to shift its strategy to include school and district reform. Over the past 4 years, the foundation has invested heavily in the development of instruments to measure the performance of teachers in a program called MET (Measuring the Effectiveness of Teachers). Perhaps the foundation has realized that individual measures of feedback are insufficient drivers for system reform. Now it has launched a new initiative called iPD (innovative professional development) centered around the idea that whole districts can create a culture and practice of continuous learning for all of their teachers, and that districts can learn from each other. The principal is obviously a key factor in this mutual learning, both within and across districts.

A system perspective makes sociological sense. If I am a good person in a bad society, I am not going to prosper as well as I might compared to moving to a better society or helping make the one I live in better. This is not as hard as it sounds when it comes to the current state of the principalship. Many jurisdictions are realizing that in the same way that within the school the group has to be used to change

the group, the same approach has to be used when it comes to district-wide and statewide reform: the savvy of the group—the schools in concert—has to be culti

vated and leveraged in order to improve the system as a whole.

As for the individual principal who feels like a cog in a district or state machine, I will argue that it is in your own self-interest to be more proactive in relation to the larger system. And there are increasing opportunities to do so.

The "system player" principal plays a key role relative to other

schools (school-to-school networks) and to the larger system (district

and state). He or she also seeks strong partnerships with the community.

Lyle Kirtman originally identified one of the key competencies associ

ated with highly effective leaders (at the school and district levels) as

"Builds External Networks/Partnerships" (Kirtman & Fullan, 2015). We

see this external role expanding in the current scenario as districts and

systems turn to school networks as a powerful strategy for spreading

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and deepening learning and its impact on students (Rincón-Gallardo and Fullan, in press).

This competency is being neglected in education today. Our best leaders show how they find time to build their own networks of support. Technology and social networking can empower us, although

too many educators fear them as vehicles for conflict and blame. The ability of a leader to see the world as his or her network of support is a defining competency for today and the future. Most principals feel they have no time or do not know how to build these networks and expand their leadership to building educational systems. But principals can learn how to increase their resources by partnering with colleges, universities, community groups, and private-sector business and professionals in a variety of sectors.

It should be clear, then, that school improvement is an organizational matter, and in fact a system phenomenon, and therefore the principal, as one of the key leaders, plays a crucial role internally and externally to the school. Up to this point the principalship has been identified as one of the most critical change leader roles, but frustratingly has fallen seriously short of its potential. We now have a clear picture of what the role *should be.* The ideas across the chapters in this book identify the connection points that will be necessary to situate the principalship in its long-expected central role. This shift would make the role of the principal much more attractive, and more valuable to the school and to the system as a whole. We will return to these linkages in the final chap ter. In the meantime, what about the students?

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